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AUTHOR Miner, Norris
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ABSTRACT

Past events, present conditions, and future possibilities provide the context for this examination of the direct or indirect control of college curricula by governmental agencies. The paper first notes that while external management may be resented by educators who are entrenched in the status quo, government intervention into college instruction is very often an expression of public opinion concerning the value of education and the direction it should take. After a discussion of the authority exercised by licensing agencies in imposing curricular requirements for vocational programs, the report examines the rationales for and consequences of methods used by the Florida legislature to control community college instruction, including: (1) the elimination of funding for recreational courses; (2) the establishment of curricular priorities which excluded many non-credit courses; and (3) proviso language which bases state funding for job training courses on the enrollment of students who have been or are currently employed in the occupation for which training is provided. An examination follows of federal external control, which is exercised indirectly by requiring colleges to divert funds from instructional programs to meet the data collection requirements of the Federal Vocational Education Data System and by rulings in educational litigation. The paper concludes with a discussion of probable intervention in the future. (JP)

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EXTERNAL INTERVENTION: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

by Norris Miner
Seminole Community College
Florida

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EXTERNAL INTERVENTION:
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SEMINOLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

To discuss anything that has to do with instruction from the cloistered halls of the Institutional Research Office can be a dangerous thing. The least to be expected are cries of meddling and the worst could be a faculty led student riot which could eliminate the researcher and thus the problem. In between lie unionization, short tenure in office or hopefully, a return to the classroom where you can take up the torch against your successor. But, we are paid to see and transmit what we see to others. Further, we often sit in a position that allows us to see from a broader perspective. We may not see clearly some of the very fine points, but, by not being trapped in minute examination, we can sometimes see more of the interaction of the issues from inception to ultimate effect.

The issue of management of instruction by external sources is probably no more clear than the management of instruction by internal sources. Do we ever really manage instruction from either source? We do if we consider instruction in the broad sense of the word - the totality of what we teach. We do not if we think of instruction in the narrow sense - how the individual teacher teaches. Oddly enough we do our managing in much the same way whether it is external or internal management. We use direct methods such as adding or eliminating subjects or programs, changing requirements and changing goals and thus offerings. We use financial methods (often against our wishes) which force the elimination of subjects and programs. We often create or enlarge programs if the money flows in that direction even if the programs do not fit our goals or plans. We control programs on input-output criteria by examination of the demand (not worth) of the program and the expected placement of those completing the program.

If all of this sounds negative, it is not meant to be so or, only partly so. We live in a real world where we must recognize the events that shape our destiny. All of our possessions do not have lasting value; and therefore, some of

them must be discarded. New concepts must be embraced within the scheme of things. Money will go only so far. Many people view education as only a way to better employment and some of our cherished concepts of liberal education must be modified. These and other events seem to make the question rather one of excesses and who does what to whom and how.

Both external and internal management have their share of excesses. Internal management is as political as is much of external management. In both cases, the resources go to those with the political power. As scarce resources flow to one area, reductions in programs of other areas must follow and we have indirect management of instruction because of excesses in resource allocation. Those of us who survive by external funding, (and who does not) recognize our need to provide honest accountability. It is only when the demand for accountability reaches the stage of excessive and little used reporting or intervention into the programs of the institution, that we question the process.

A basic problem with external intervention is the lack of clarity of message. We in education are too often entrenched in the status quo. We tend to perpetuate rather than innovate. Very often external intervention is a statement of real and viable public opinion about the perceived value of education or a statement about the direction education should be taking. Since it is the public which is both the consumer and financier of our product, we in education need to understand and react to the message. All too often the message becomes garbled in governmental translation into action and, sad to say, all too often the educational practitioner spends too much time with the required reaction and too little time with attempts to understand the cause and act to meet public need and opinion. With stable or declining enrollments, it would appear that the time spent in interpreting external intervention as indicators of public expectation would be well spent. Educators might even become educated to become actors instead of reactors. If we do, surely the force of the shock of external intervention could be lessened and to some extent controlled.

Future shock seems to be one of the "in" things at this time. This paper will look at management of instruction by external agencies in the context of past, present, and future shock. The examination shall be illustrative not exhaustive. The examples are chosen to point out various means of management, the different agencies that manage, and the reactions or actions prompted by these different acts of management. An

attempt will be made to look at some possible future intervention and the expected impact of that intervention.

One often overlooks the direct external management force of the licensing or accrediting agency. This shock has been, is, and will be. The degree of severity of the management ranges from the broad, beneficial, and self imposed Regional Accrediting Agency control to the often course by course, almost page by page, control of certain licensing or certifying agencies. The community colleges with vocational programs find these latter controls in police science, nursing, LPN, EMT, and other programs. The institutional research office is, or should be, involved in two ways. First; there should be a thorough understanding by the Board of Trustees of the real need for the program in providing unmet community needs and the real demand from potential students within the community for the program. Secondly; there is a need for understanding the total long range commitment of resources required to implement the program. Too often, the information presented to the Board is in the form of impassioned pleas and biased research produced by those who have a program to sell. If the program cannot be justified by real need, real demand, and complete information on resource commitment, the program can become an indirect financial manager of other programs by reducing the resources available for distribution/allocation to existing programs. Educators also need to examine carefully these externally managed programs in the context of institutional goals and concepts of quality. An associate of Science Degree with all course requirements dedicated to meeting the requirements of the licensing agency could well prevent inclusion of liberal arts courses which are considered important to all degree programs within the college. If these liberal arts requirements are removed from one program, why not all. Thus, the acceptance of one program could manage the instruction in many other programs.

Past shock provides an example of external management by the indirect method of funding or rather the total removal of funding. A group of non-credit courses which were intended to provide avocational or recreational opportunities for the community were removed from state supported funding in 1975. Further, colleges were required to set fees for these courses such that the income would exceed teacher cost by 25%. The removal from funding of these courses pointed up several areas of vulnerability within the system. First; it was a "no new tax" year. Community colleges had moved from the bridal chamber. The honeymoon was over. Second; community colleges

believed that education was for life and living and not just job training. The colleges thought every one understood their mission and their goals and had not bothered to sell or explain these goals and missions. The legislature, we found, did not understand. Third; these programs were staffed totally by part-time people. If the courses were removed, there would be no firings, only the loss of some extra income by some people. Fourth; the community college information system provided the bullets that were fired at us. The legislature had on hand in Tallahassee detailed data on these courses provided by the colleges. A course entitled "Poodle Grooming" became the battle cry. The fact that the course played to a standing room only crowd made no difference.

The 125% fee requirement removed programs for the aged and other groups who could not pay. The new look (and it sells) is a fun and games approach for those who can pay the bill. We now deal with a part of the community not the community. Of course, we still send the detailed data but we add to it an audit report of income and expenses.

Past shock provides another example of external management in the same area of offerings. Another set of non-credit courses was aimed at providing the community with offerings designed to meet non-vocational needs. Needs were to a large extent defined by public demand. Offerings ranged from humanity courses for the aged through direct community health needs. The management this time came in two forms. Indirect management by financial means was exercised as the funding was removed by the legislature from the community college and placed in a separate pool to be divided between the community college and the K-12 system in each community college district. Direct management came in defining the limits of needs at the state level. No longer was humanities a need even if it was the year of the bicentennial. In fact, the colleges found to their surprise that communities had only six well defined needs. Courses have to be approved by the Division of Community Colleges as meeting only the state defined needs. A local needs study is required to document the needs within the six categories. A detailed report on a course by course basis with income and expense is, of course, required.

We are in present shock over a direct legislative management of our instruction. The method of establishing the instructional management was the use of the proviso language of the appropriations bill of 1978. At times, one can not

help but feel that we have two sessions of the legislature. The open session when bills are debated in both houses and the process is clear and open, and second session which begins with the appointment of the joint House Senate Appropriations Committee during the last week or two of the session. There is a switch from a binary legislature to a unitary legislature. Decisions in this second session seem to be made more on the basis of compromise than on the basis of the open debate on issues. In fact, some things appear in the proviso language of the appropriations act that have been turned down in the first binary session. History has shown that the product of this committee almost always becomes the law. The simple volume of the act and the time constraints divert attention from the proviso language. The results are often devastating to the institutions. For example, appropriations act proviso language denied community college personnel the opportunity for pay raises in 1975-76 while all other elements of education were allowed the opportunity for a raise, and it did not stop there. Subsequently, court action greatly eroded the independence of local Boards of Trustees. The courts decision stated that Trustees can exercise local option only on local funds; however, with State funds comes total State Control.

The cause of our present shock is a combination of limiting enrollments, setting of priorities by the legislature, course approval by the Division of Community Colleges along with the Division of Vocational Education of the State Department of Education, complicated reporting and accounting requirements, and disturbing new funding implications. The proviso language called for a fifty percent reduction in the number of credits produced in the supplemental area of vocation-technical offerings. These supplemental courses had been somewhat loosely defined as retraining or job upgrading courses. However, many colleges used the category to include a number of offerings which did not fit well into a vocational program structure. There was even a rumor that some colleges were using the classification to avoid the difficult and costly placement and follow-up required of all vocational programs. Some of the Legislature seem to be disturbed by the volume of supplemental courses in the area of non-vocational homemaking, and the proviso language reflects this concern by placing homemaking in the lowest of four priority areas. Public service occupations (police, fire, governmental mid-management, etc.) were ranked as priority one. Other industrial occupations needing retraining or upgrading was given second priority and worker pool training third priority. Enrollments would be funded only if an audit trail could be established to demonstrate that the student "is now or has been" employed in the occupation for which the training is provided or a related occupation. By the time

the system came on line with all courses approved by both the Division of Community Colleges and the Vocational-Technical Division, the first registration had been completed. The registered students had to be reregistered and a new registration process developed. Students who did not meet the previous employment criteria could take the course if the fees covered the direct instructional cost as determined by the latest cost analysis of the college. If a college accepted these students, it found itself with a dual fee structure for each class. Therefore, colleges were forced to develop new student accounting systems which would remove students who did not meet the previous employment criteria, as these students could not be counted in fundable FTE. State funding for these courses was removed from the community college fund and placed in a special fund. These monies were to be paid to the college in three installments. The last two installment payments depended on a series of new reports of production and projected production in each of the priority areas. Although the monies were not a large percent of the total budget, the new approach to funding was totally inconsistent with previous methods. The budgetary process in this new area had to deal with a change from committed income to hoped for income. The question became whether to remove the hoped for income, adjust the budget, and then adjust again when the money was committed or to leave the budget alone and adjust only if the money was withheld. The first choice is time consuming, the second, risky.

A system that prides itself on teaching had a learning problem. All of the elements of vulnerability that caused problems with the avocational or recreational courses were present in the supplementary offerings: 1) a need for money within the total state educational allotment to support remediation for students who did not pass the high school assessment, and 2) a very poor understanding of the need for and value of the supplementary offerings by the public and the legislature, 3) the offerings were staffed mostly by part-time personnel, 4) we had taken a liberty or two with the classification, and, 5) there was a good course to use as a battle cry - Cake Decorating. There was some doubt in the minds of the legislature that all of the hundreds of program completors were really employed as professional cake decorators. The colleges still have some programs with these areas of vulnerability. We still feel the colleges should not worry because it always happens only to the other person.

The federal government is the cause of a shock that will be implemented this coming year. The effect upon instruction

will be indirect at first. Later, the shock could become very direct. A new federal vocational reporting requirement entitled Vocational Education Data System (VEDS) is in the process of implementation. The community colleges with vocational programs will comply or lose federal vocational funds.

The Florida system of community colleges would seem to suffer guilt by association in the case of VEDS. During the 1975 and 1976 federal legislative hearings on the reauthorization of the Vocational Acts there was a lack of reliable data on the national level for vocational programs. VEDS is an effort to obtain that data. The community colleges of the State of Florida have a very good information system on vocational programs, but there seems to be a question about data from other States and from areas other than the community college. The question of the compatibility of data and the ability of the government to assemble the data from a multiplicity of sources compounded the problem. The solution to the problems is a massive, detailed-to-the-student, information system requiring establishment of new data elements on a population which has since departed the doors of the institutions.

The present effect on instruction is simply that the massive cost of compliance will divert funds from the instructional effort. Five million dollars was appropriated to implement the system in secondary schools. Nothing was appropriated for postsecondary education. While no true cost data are available at this point in time, of course, estimates of the cost of implementation are staggering. Miami Dade Community College estimates cost of compliance at \$300,000. The federal vocational funds for Miami Dade are set at \$450,000. Thus, 67% of federal funds must be diverted to reporting. The State of Washington Community College System has a sophisticated information system which cost \$1,396,000 annually to operate. To meet the requirements of VEDS an additional \$900,000 is expected to be spent. In this case the addition to the system uses up 25% of the federal dollar. These examples are enough to illustrate the scope of the problem of diverted funds.

If the Florida experience can serve as a guide, a secondary effect of VEDS could very well be the elimination or reduction of programs because of the new data base. The Florida community college state data base seems to be used against the colleges as often as for them. Another way to state this phenomenon would be to say that the control center seems to shift upward as the sophistication of information system improves at the

next level of operation. This phenomenon holds true within the college as well as between the college and government levels.

The threat of withholding federal funds is also used by the Federal Courts. The effect on instruction can take the form of diverted funds required for compliance reporting and compliance activities to changes made in curricular offerings felt necessary to meet compliance. Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) efforts to implement the findings of the Adams Case have added a layer of bureaucracy at both state and institutional level. New reporting requirements were also imposed. There was little effort made to determine the availability of data from other sources and the new reports were not used to replace previous reporting. Funding for the effort was not forthcoming from the legislature thus it became an institutional responsibility. The diverted resources came in part from the instructional programs. This is not to say that the effort was not warranted, but, only to point out the effect on the instructional programs of the institution. One disturbing element in the process was the "guilt by association" aspects. All of the higher education in Florida was treated as one unit. Even if an institution could demonstrate exemplary programs which went well beyond compliance, the institution was saddled with the problems of other institutions with real problems in the area of compliance.

In some institutions, there had to be a shift in emphasis within the instructional programs. The institutional plans had to provide for programs needed for overcoming educational deficiencies on entry and for improving retention after entry. Again, there was a closed system of resources. If changes were required, the resources had to be taken from within the system. Institutional concepts of quality came into play if previous non-credit remediation efforts were changed to credit courses. This change was made in some cases to allow the student to complete the program in a standard time frame. Even if the effort was justified, we must recognize that the effort did change instructional patterns.

Other court cases such as Bakke are resource depleters. A lawyer now can be considered a full-time employee at many institutions. Some institutions are presently in litigation over discrimination and reverse discrimination at the same time. These institutions must be doing something right or everything wrong.

What of future shock? The problem of power coming with data will continue to grow. There is a saying that "if institutions won't do it government will." Institutions often do not know what to do or if they know what to do the institution is not sure how. Whatever "it" is it shall be done to or for them.

Some things, however, seem to loom large on the educational horizon. Competency testing for two years of general education will obviously cause some change in institutional instructional programs. General education requirements for degrees could change to reflect the underlying assumptions of the test makers. If the public school experience is any guide, there could be a new remediation effort. This new effort could once again change previous remediation and retention efforts. In fact, present remediation and retention efforts could well have to undergo another complete revision.

The move to standard space criteria with the accompanying utilization studies could impose instructional limitations by the indirect method of space control. Funding seems to be moving toward functional categories rather than delivery system categories now used. Institutions have not yet felt the impact of the new high school certificates of attendance and the possible effects on civil rights compliance. Equal access is not an accomplished fact. In fact, there is much to be done in the area of the handicapped. Women and minority rights have not become established facts. We are just beginning to face problems associated with entry and exit criteria required for justification of programs. The system will have to prove the worth of each of its programs.

Long range planning is a highly recommended process. However, the process of review and analysis of where we are and how we got there seems to be most necessary at this point. We can expend our energies in commenting on the value or necessity of external intervention but that intervention is here, and it has created change, and will continue to do so.

Many of us in higher education need to pause and examine the causes and effects of past and present intervention. If we will perform this examination with open minds, we could very well lessen future shock. We might also find that the intervention has made a mockery of some of our stated goals and missions. If these goals and missions no longer fit, we need to establish a set of realistic goals and missions. Without a realistic set, we will not properly utilize our resources today, nor can we plan for the future.

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